

with a White House intern. It is wrong even if she consented. It is wrong because the President is married. It is wrong because the concept of consent is strained between persons of such differing persons of power. It is wrong because sex outside of marriage is wrong. It is wrong to lie about all of these matters. It is wrong to ask, induce or threaten others to lie about them as well.

Not everything that is wrong is illegal. Not everything that is illegal should be grounds for impeachment. For example, taking God's name in vain is wrong. A law to punish it, however, would violate the first amendment, and it is inconceivable that we would impeach a President for blasphemy, no matter how flagrant.

In addition, our country has rules to protect all of us, and we are all better off for those rules' existence. Foremost among these rules is that we demand proof of wrongdoing. Not simply in criminal wrong, but also in our daily judgments of each other, it is wise and good to require proof rather than to operate on a presumption of guilt, fueled by rumor.

President Clinton has asserted his innocence to every allegation listed above. There may be reason to doubt his denials, devoid as they are of any explanation for the questionable conduct. But there is also a process to follow to ensure that no one's reputation, let alone a President's tenure in office, be jeopardized lightly.

To defend his character, however, President Clinton does owe all of us a complete explanation. It is simply not true that rules of court prohibit him from comment. They do not. It is his choice alone that keeps him from comment.

It still is quite a further matter, however, to find in all of this evidence of a crime or of an impeachable offense. Herein lies the confusion. Former Judge Kenneth Starr appears to be investigating the lurid using means we usually reserve for investigating organized crime suspects. What he is attempting, I suspect, is to develop a case of the President inducing witnesses like Webb Hubbell to lie or be uncooperative in the Whitewater matter, and by showing the President to be doing so in the Paula Jones matter, he hopes to have a more convincing case. But more convincing to whom?

Judge Starr has announced he will not be seeking to indict the President criminally, pledging instead to turn over whatever evidence of impeachable evidence of impeachable offenses he may find to the House Committee on the Judiciary. That committee, however, can carry on its own investigation. It exists constitutionally apart from any special counsel. It predates the special counsel by almost 200 years.

Insofar as the President's own behavior is at issue, therefore, it is time to move from Judge Starr's forum to the House Committee on the Judiciary,

after a reasonable but short time to allow Judge Starr to do so in an orderly fashion. All matters presently pending before other committees of Congress relating to grounds of impeachment of President Clinton should also be consolidated before the House Committee on the Judiciary. These other committees and Judge Starr himself may continue investigations into the potential wrongdoing of others. Indeed, Judge Starr has already won 13 convictions or guilty pleas.

I fully expect to follow the work of the Committee on the Judiciary with great care and, if the evidence warrants it, to vote to impeach President Clinton. I would be prepared to do so on the merits, whether the economy is doing well or doing poorly. I urge this action in the alternative hope that if the President is deserving of impeachment, the process might start sufficiently soon to allow for the speedy removal of office of one unworthy of it, or in the alternative, if the President is not deserving of impeachment, that the President be freed from the strains attendant upon the several continuing investigations.

As to the President's personal reputation, I am very sad. If he continues to refuse to volunteer a more credible defense than his simple denial, then he risks becoming an object of ridicule, trivializing himself and much that he seeks to accomplish in his remaining years in office. He has already lost much credibility, and that is not because of any actions of Judge Starr. He has lost credibility because he has minced words time after time in denying what is accused while refusing to say what did happen.

It may turn out that the President did act immorally on many occasions and seemingly without remorse. And yes, this does matter to his official functions. Lying comes easier with practice. Viewing a subordinate employee as an object for one's own gratifications dehumanizes both persons. But the authority of private judgment, the sense of regret of our country might remain as the public matter goes to the Committee on the Judiciary.

#### ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Member must avoid personal references to the President of the United States in debate.

#### TRIBUTE TO WAYNE FOWLER

(Mrs. FOWLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. FOWLER. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a dear friend and now former employee of this great institution, Wayne Fowler. We all have two families when we come here, one back home and the one we make here. I am proud to include Wayne in my family here in this House.

It makes it all the easier that we coincidentally share the same last name.

When I first met Wayne, we became fast friends. We had so much in common besides the Fowler name. Wayne is a native of the State that I now represent. We both attended college in Georgia and found our way to careers on Capitol Hill. While I was serving as a legislative assistant to Georgia Congressman Robert Stephens in the late 1960s, Wayne was serving as an LA to Florida Congressman Don Fuqua. Prior to that Wayne worked for Congressman Charlie Bennett, the Member whom I succeeded in 1992.

Wayne and I both left the Hill for a while, only to be drawn back by our mutual interest in public service. Wayne served this House for 32 years, 22 of these right here at this rostrum in the House. As he begins his much deserved retirement, I want to wish him well and thank him on behalf of a grateful Congress. He is already missed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY of New York addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### IN CELEBRATION OF WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I wanted to acknowledge my colleague who spoke earlier on this whole issue of Ken Starr and the President. I thank him for his balance.

Let me say that I associate myself with the sense of his remarks that none of us should be acting precipitously. As a Member of the House Committee on the Judiciary, I have repeatedly stated that this is a time for facts, measured efforts, full investigations and the cessation of accusations. I hope my colleague on the other side of the aisle would likewise join me in these comments, for, as a member of the Committee on the Judiciary, it seems even to me that calls for impeachment and impeachment proceedings may themselves be precipitous.

I rose today to celebrate a very important occasion this month as we begin to celebrate women's history month. That is my pride in the announcement today by the President of the United States along with Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Dan Goldin, NASA Administrator, of the selection of Colonel Eileen Collins to be the first commander of the space shuttle and NASA where she is located in Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas. As a Congresswoman from Houston and a

member of the House Committee on Science, I cannot tell Members what an important day this was for those of us who believe in the opportunities for women, wherever their preparedness and their abilities may take them.

□ 1345

As a member of the House Committee on Science, I was greatly concerned at the recent national study that showed that our children, no matter who they were, were not competitive internationally with math and science. How wonderful it was to hear Colonel Eileen Collins salute her parents as her first teachers and her love for math and science. How wonderful it was for her to be able to say to me how she would enthusiastically join me in visiting some of my schools in order to share herself as a role model in explaining to young people the value of math and science.

Another special note that Colonel Collins started out in community college, which says to all Americans in support of the President's efforts to ensure that every American has a chance, an opportunity for higher education, and that they can be successful and can start in their community college systems where they can go for free under new legislation we just passed.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to support Eileen Collins and say we have important issues before us, and that is why, as I close, that I want to say that the Children's Congressional Caucus will be dealing with the question of mental illness that impacts our children. I think no child should be left out. And what we want to do is to focus our attention on ensuring that any child who has a diagnosed behavioral emotional problem is not cast aside and it is said, well, they cannot be anything. Our hearing will focus on enhancing the resources, accessibility to resources, and helping those parents who are trying to help their children.

This has been a combination of issues, but I think they match each other, one by starting out and saying let us get the facts regarding the leadership of this Nation; let us salute a woman who is already a leader, who will lead us into space; and let us not forget our children, those who may be thought of as castaways, and let us make sure we provide all the resources we can give to our children to make them the very best in this Nation. Let us not be spendthrifts or cut the dollars where we need them in order to help our children.

#### INTRODUCTION OF PARENTAL FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. TIAHRT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIAHRT. Mr. Speaker, recent news reports reflect that American children are not doing very well in math and science when compared to

other countries. This is not good news, especially when we think of how well Americans will compete in the future. Our world is becoming more and more technological and we rely on math and science every day, and so when we see this lack of an ability to compete, we should all be concerned.

Now the solution to this problem is not simple; it is a multifaceted solution that is needed. But today I want to focus on one of the facets: getting parents involved in the education process.

Today there are barriers in place, obstacles that keep parents from becoming involved. Teachers and principals have told me that when parents are involved with their children's education, the kids do better and the schools are stronger. So, Mr. Speaker, I have submitted legislation to encourage parental involvement by ensuring that parents have access to their children's public school records. I believe an informed parent is an involved parent, an involved parent in their child's education.

The Parental Freedom of Information Act is based on the need to provide active involved parents with information that is vital for them to exercise their right to guide the upbringing of their children. The rationale for this legislation derives from an alarming number of recent cases in which the rights of parents have been ignored and they have had to go to court to secure the basic information which the parental Freedom of Information Act provides for.

The current hodgepodge of State and Federal laws and legal precedents simply does not provide parents of public school children with a clear-cut right to access information regarding the content of the education their children are receiving.

The Parental Freedom of Information Act will amend the 1974 Family Education Rights and Privacy Act, called FERPA, and strengthen the right of parents of elementary and secondary public school students by guaranteeing parents access to the curriculum their children are exposed to. This includes textbooks, audiovisual materials, manuals, journals, films and any supplementary materials. It will provide access to testing materials administered to their children. It will also require parental consent prior to any student being required to undergo medical, psychological or psychiatric examination, testing or treatment at school, except for emergency care.

Now, this provision does not apply to children who voluntarily wish to meet with a school counselor or visit the nurse's office for medical assistance and services.

The Parental Freedom of Information Act will withhold Federal funds from educational institutions which deny parents access to this information. In addition, the act will allow parents to seek judicial relief and recoup legal costs when their access to this information is denied.

This is an important new enforcement device placed directly in the hands of parents. The Parental Freedom of Information Act in no way seeks to influence the content of curriculum or tests. It simply guarantees that parents have access to the basic information which they must be aware of if they are going to become actively engaged in the education of their child.

The need for the enactment of the Parental Freedom of Information Act is seen when considering some of the following situations: Parents in California were forced to go to court to obtain copies of the curriculum in their sons' decision-making class. The parents believed that the class actually involved a number of family issues and were trying to decide whether they would attempt to remove their two sons from this class.

In the State of Texas, a mandatory test was administered by the Texas Education Agency and they refused to allow parents to view the test even after it was given. Officials claimed their test was secure or secret, and they would not even allow teachers and administrators or school board members to review the test.

In my own experience as a member of the State's Senate Education Committee in Kansas, I requested to review a State standard assessment test. After initially being denied access to the test, eventually I was allowed to see what other taxpaying parents were denied. I discovered in a junior high reading comprehension test a story of a junior high girl who developed a relationship with the statue of a crow. In this story the crow becomes the girl's spiritual guide.

This was offensive to most all parents in the State of Kansas. It did not reflect community standards, yet every junior high student in Kansas was going to be subjected to such a wrong philosophy. Fortunately, because of my position on the State's Senate Education Committee, the story was changed and there were other wonderful alternatives, stories about the history of Kansas or the history of America, yet they were overlooked to purport such a wrong philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I encourage all of my colleagues to support the Parental Freedom of Information Act.

#### ASIAN TRADE REFORM IMPLEMENTATION BILL

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. BERRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues' support for legislation I introduced to increase fairness in international trade.

As my record shows, I am a strong advocate of fair trade and expanding markets for American products. Our sound economy is due largely to our commitment to open trade. This open trade has led to global competition,